



Barrington Area Council on Aging, Inc.

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November 14, 2007

Ms. Victoria J. Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I am the Executive Director of the Barrington Area Council on Aging in Barrington, Illinois. In my capacity as Executive Director over the past twelve years, I have overseen the provision of a wide variety of programs and services for older adults and family caregivers in our community. The Barrington Area Council on Aging is the primary organization in the Barrington area that serves older adults and family caregivers. We provide information on senior services; help senior's access public benefit programs; provide meals with wheels to frail elders; and offer a variety of educational and support groups to seniors and their caregivers. I am very concerned about the health and welfare of older adults. One of my greatest concerns is the ability of public safety vehicles, both paramedic and fire protection, to quickly respond to an older adult or family caregiver who are in need of emergency care. In addition, I am concerned about overall traffic congestion and safety at grade crossings for older adults, who may react more slowly to traffic signals.

It has come to my attention that Canadian National Railway Company seeks to acquire the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway Co, which operates a rail line that runs through the heart of the Barrington area. I am writing to urge the Surface Transportation Board to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for this transaction. The transaction will have a significant impact on the ability of public safety vehicles to serve older adults in our community. It will also affect traffic congestion and safety at grade crossings. Only the rigorous review required by the EIS process will develop alternatives and mitigation procedures sufficient to limit that impact. This review should include impacts of the transaction further into the future than the three years Canadian National currently estimates.

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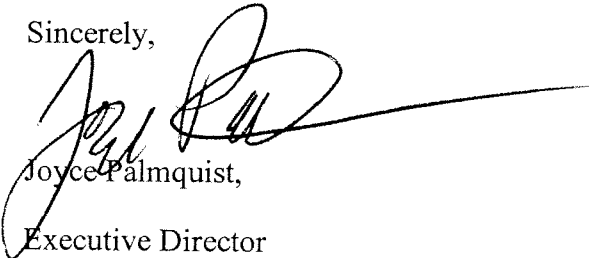
Diane Vos Hansen
Social Service Coordinator

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In general, I am concerned about how the health and welfare of older adults we be affected as a result of this transaction. As stated before, public safety vehicles regularly need to cross the E, J & E rail line to respond to emergency calls. As a result of existing rail activity, vehicle traffic congestion is already a serious issue in our community. I dread the thought of adding more volume without having a comprehensive management plan. My Meals with Wheels volunteers already complain about having difficulty delivering meals due to rail traffic delays. Finally, I am concerned about safety at grade crossings. Unfortunately, the occurrence of vehicle accidents and deaths at grade crossings is already an unpleasant reality in our community. We definitely need to look very closely at public safety issues as this purchase is being considered.

If the Board does not require an EIS, we will not have the information we need to prevent a severe degradation in the local environment. Moreover, the EIS should look further into the future than the three years for which CN has estimated traffic increases; such a shortsighted view does not take into account major changes expected in our region for future generations. The SEA should immediately begin developing a scope of study for a draft EIS that emphasizes the impact on public safety in the Barrington area. I look forward to further correspondence with SEA and the Board on the EIS process.

Sincerely,



Joyce Palmquist,

Executive Director